

# On the Cultivation of College Students' Constitutional Consciousness in the New Era

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**ABSTRACT.** Constitutional consciousness is the general name of people's subjective mentality, thoughts, concepts, attitudes, knowledge and evaluation system arising from constitutional practice from the perspective of constitution. Cultivating college students' constitutional awareness is the consistent proposition of the CPC and China, and the inevitable requirement to realize the goal of "ruling the country by law and building a socialist country ruled by law". In order to give full play to the important role of the constitution in upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, and to carry out the constitution in mind and in practice, it is necessary to enhance the constitutional awareness of college students who are the main builders of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. This paper objectively analyzes the problems existing in the cultivation of college students' constitutional consciousness, and puts forward some positive measures that should be taken to cultivate college students' constitutional consciousness.

**KEYWORDS:** New era, College students, Constitutional consciousness

## 1. Introduction

In March 2018, the Constitution of the People's Republic of China was revised for the fifth time, marking a renewal of the Constitution in the new era, and once again promoting the trend of learning the latest constitutional amendment and raising the awareness of the constitution. Legal consciousness, which is a special form of social consciousness, is the combination of people's knowledge, thoughts and ideas about the legal phenomenon [1]. Constitutional consciousness is the combination of people's knowledge, views, and thoughts about constitutional phenomena. The revision of the Constitution is an important event in the political life of the Party and the country. It is a major political decision made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in adhering to and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics from a global and strategic perspective in the new era. It is also an important deployment to promote the overall rule of law [2]. Contemporary college students are the backbone of the future socialist construction. College Students' awareness of constitution should be cultivated to make them fully realize that constitution is the highest standard of our social behavior. Constitutional consciousness reflects a country and its people's understanding and recognition of the Constitution and its spirit to a certain extent [3]. As the builders and successors of the future socialist rule of law China, college students' constitutional awareness undoubtedly has a profound impact on the overall promotion of the rule of law. Colleges and universities are important places to cultivate builders and successors of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is of great significance for colleges and universities to further strengthen the cultivation of College Students' constitutional consciousness.

## 2. The Importance of Cultivating College Students' Constitutional Consciousness in the New Era

### *2.1 The Cultivation of College Students' Constitutional Consciousness in the New Era is a Realistic Requirement for the Construction of China Ruled by Law*

Our party attaches great importance to the important role of the constitution in governing the country. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) proposed that "the first thing to insist on governing the country according to law is to insist on governing the country according to the constitution, and the first thing to insist on governing the country according to the constitution". Although college students have mastered the basic constitutional knowledge, due to their outdated constitutional concepts, they have vague understanding of the core contents, functions, implementation and evaluation of the constitution, and the level of constitutional awareness needs to be further improved [4]. The inclusion of the major theoretical viewpoints and major principles and policies determined by the 19th National Congress of the Party fully reflects the new achievements, new experiences and new

requirements of the development of the Party and the state, and is conducive to better playing the role of the Constitution in promoting, guaranteeing, guiding and standardizing the adherence to and development of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era [5]. However, the key to the construction of a China ruled by law lies in the awareness of the rule of law, especially the degree to which the constitutional awareness is established among all citizens. Only with the people's heartfelt support and sincere belief can the constitution and the law be truly endowed with authority and supremacy. The party and the country have always attached importance to the cultivation of college students' constitutional awareness, because college students now will become the backbone of all walks of life in the future, and they will shoulder the important task of building a democratic, civilized and prosperous socialist country in the future.

## ***2.2 The Cultivation of College Students' Constitutional Consciousness in the New Era is an Important Part of Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities***

Ideological and political education in colleges and universities is an important part of education and teaching in colleges and universities. The basic aim and standpoint of ideological and political education in colleges and universities are to focus on students, take care of students, serve students, and continuously improve students' ideological level, political consciousness, moral quality and cultural accomplishment, so that students can become talents with both ability and political integrity and all-round development. Confucianism, the dominant theory in Chinese traditional culture, has been worshipping the kingship, rank and order from beginning to end. This cultural system is based on the patriarchal hierarchy [6]. Therefore, strengthening the constitutional awareness of college students in the new era can ensure the establishment and stability of constitutional authority, which is conducive to safeguarding the democratic rights of the people and safeguarding the fundamental interests of the people. On the one hand, we need to further strengthen the construction of socialist legal system; On the other hand, to a large extent, it depends on the improvement of the legal consciousness of the public and the whole society, especially the constitutional consciousness. The cultivation of college students' constitutional consciousness refers to the systematic cultivation and practice activities that colleges and universities provide college students with necessary constitutional education conditions and suitable environment for the cultivation of constitutional consciousness, so as to protect and promote college students to form constitutional consciousness that meets the needs of a certain society and a certain class. It is the general name of subjective state of mind, thoughts, concepts, attitudes, knowledge and evaluation system generated in the constitutional practice from the perspective of the constitution. It is the conscious guarantee to establish socialist core values.

## **3. Problems in Cultivating College Students' Constitutional Consciousness in the New Era**

Socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, and China's construction under the rule of law has embarked on a new journey. The constitution consciousness of college students does not come into being spontaneously, but only through conscious cultivation can the constitution become the belief of college students. Contemporary college students are an important force in social and political life and the pillars of the future construction of a socialist country ruled by law. Although contemporary college students have mastered the basic content of constitutional knowledge, they still have a vague understanding of the core content, function, implementation and evaluation of the constitution, and the level of constitutional awareness needs to be further improved [7]. The problems existing in the cultivation of college students' constitutional consciousness mainly include:

### ***3.1 The Status of Cultivating College Students' Constitutional Awareness Needs to Be Improved***

College students are builders and successors of the rule of law in China. Cultivating their constitutional awareness is directly related to the country's level of rule of law and the realization of civil society. However, in real life, the supervision system for the implementation of the constitution is weak, and unconstitutional acts of legislation, justice and law enforcement occur from time to time, which to a large extent undermine the authority and seriousness of the constitution, hinder the implementation of the constitution, and seriously affect the formation and consolidation of citizens' constitutional concepts. The existence of faith is manifested through human activities, and at the same time, faith also dominates human behavior [8]. The belief in the constitution means that people have sincere feelings towards the constitution, are willing to obey the rule of the constitution, and regard the constitution as a standard to regulate their own behavior and make it a part of life. The ultimate goal of the rule of law is to establish a rule of law order with "constitution first" as its core, and at the same time to establish a belief in the supremacy of constitution in citizens' hearts. Specifically, constitutional knowledge refers to the general name of people's understanding and experience of constitutional concepts, sources, norms and guidelines in constitutional learning and application. Therefore, we should attach importance to the cultivation of college students' constitutional beliefs and enhance their constitutional awareness in their active perception of the constitutional spirit and grasp the essence of the constitution.

### ***3.2 The Effectiveness of Constitutional Teaching in Colleges and Universities Needs to Be Strengthened***

Constitutional classroom teaching in colleges and universities is an important way to cultivate college students' constitutional consciousness. Since the State Education Commission decided in 1986 to offer "legal basis" courses in universities, classroom teaching has always been the main channel of constitutional education. Confucianism, the dominant theory in Chinese traditional culture, has been worshipping the kingship, rank and order from beginning to end. This kind of cultural system based on patriarchal hierarchy obviously cannot breed the constitutional consciousness needed for constitutional construction. The concern and evaluation on the implementation of the Constitution are indifferent. One of the important reasons is that the publicity and education on the Constitution in schools are not enough. College students do not receive systematic education on constitutional knowledge, and constitutional knowledge is seriously lacking [9]. The strength of people's awareness of constitutional rights is often the standard to measure a country's level of rule of law. However, college students' awareness of constitutional rights is worrying: many college students do not know that they enjoy constitutional rights at all and their subjective awareness is not strong; The constitution teaching in colleges and universities also has several aspects to be strengthened, such as teaching content, teaching methods, teaching assessment, etc. Many college students cannot really understand the connotation of constitutional authority. On the one hand, because the constitution is far away from college students' daily life, its authority and value cannot be directly felt; On the other hand, with the emergence of numerous unconstitutional phenomena in the society, the majesty of the constitution is greatly reduced.

### ***3.3 The Cultural Environment of Rule of Law in Colleges and Universities Needs to Be Improved***

The economic foundation on which the law came into being and played its role is relatively weak. The constitution is the product of democracy. The emergence, content and development of the constitution all depend on democratic politics. The cultivation of college students' constitutional consciousness cannot be without the edification and influence of a specific legal culture environment. It is necessary to improve the legal environment outside and inside colleges and universities. As far as the outside school is concerned, the national publicity and education for popularizing legal knowledge is not enough and the overall atmosphere is not strong. In addition, at present, there are no teachers specialized in constitutional knowledge education in China's colleges and universities to teach students constitutional courses, and most of them are teachers of political public courses who give students scattered little constitutional knowledge in the teaching of political public courses. Understanding of one's due role and attitude in the implementation of the constitution, self-awareness of the correct exercise of citizens' rights and obligations, and constitutional evaluation of state organs and citizens' behavior, etc. A large number of students only understand it as the right to vote and stand for election, but they know little about constitutional rights such as personal freedom and freedom of speech. The consciousness of exercising constitutional rights is not strong, and many college students are still in a passive and passive state in exercising constitutional rights.

### ***3.4 The Constitution Consciousness of College Students and the Quality of Teachers Need to Be Improved***

The strength of the teachers' team cultivated by college students' constitutional consciousness directly affects the final effect of cultivating college students' constitutional consciousness. China's traditional natural economy and semi-natural economy still account for a large proportion in the national economy. The backward mode of production adapted to the natural economy often makes people unable to take the initiative to control their own destiny. There is a certain cognitive deviation in the understanding of the role and significance of the constitution. It is the requirement of the times to have a correct understanding of the enhancement and development of constitutional awareness, and it is also not aware of the role they can play in promoting the development of society. Constitutional education in colleges and universities is limited to classroom teaching to a certain extent, and there is no new, vivid, intuitive, participatory and combined educational method according to the psychological and social characteristics of young college students. Especially in non-political and legal colleges, the composition of the staff responsible for the cultivation of college students' consciousness is more complicated. There are not only teachers of ideological and political theory, but also a large number of staff such as school workers, Youth League Committee, Propaganda Department, etc. The world outlook, outlook on life and values of contemporary college students have not yet been fully formed. Perceptual knowledge is higher than rational knowledge. They have not really formed their faith in and respect for the Constitution. Third, college students are highly utilitarian and lack sufficient confidence in the implementation of the Constitution.

## **4. An Effective Way to Cultivate College Students' Constitutional Consciousness in the New Era**

College students' constitutional consciousness does not come into being spontaneously, but only through conscious cultivation can they abide by the constitution, defend the constitution, advocate the constitution and believe in the

constitution. The most urgent task is to strengthen the research on legal education, especially constitutional education, and to combine the theoretical education of the constitution with the actual situation, especially in connection with the ideological understanding of college students. To enable college students to form the basic concepts of abiding by the constitution, defending the constitution, advocating the constitution and believing in the constitution, so that the constitutional consciousness can truly become an important part of the essential subjective consciousness in the healthy personality and psychological structure of college students. Mainly from the following aspects:

#### ***4.1 Colleges and Universities Should Strengthen Top-Level Design to Highlight the Important Position of Cultivating College Students' Constitutional Awareness***

Colleges and universities should strengthen top-level design, put the cultivation of college students' constitutional consciousness in an important position in school education, attach importance to the cultivation of college students' constitutional consciousness from the perspective of the overall development of the school, effectively integrate the human, material and financial resources of the school, and form an all-round and multi-level cultivation system of college students' constitutional consciousness. It is to firmly establish the ideology of ruling the country by law and supremacy of constitution in the minds of college students. The premise of governing the country according to law is to govern the country according to the constitution. The supremacy of the constitution should be deeply rooted in the minds of college students. Vigorously carry out campus cultural activities such as lectures on constitutional knowledge, seminars, and prize-winning contests on constitutional knowledge, and integrate constitutional knowledge, the importance of the constitution, and the spirit of the constitution into the construction of campus culture ruled by law. The existence and strength of the concept of constitutional supremacy is a sign to measure the existence and strength of a society and a constitutional subject. Promoting the motivation of constitutional study. Focus on the constitutional function, combine the basic rights of citizens stipulated in the constitution with the real life of college students, especially grasp the social hot spots that college students pay attention to, so that college students no longer think that the constitution is just "a piece of paper with people's rights".

#### ***4.2 Efforts Should Be Made to Reform Constitutional Teaching***

We should pay attention to guiding students to establish the concept of people's sovereignty and highlight the sense of ownership of college students. China is a socialist country where the people are the masters of the country. All state power belongs to the people and the government is the public servant of the people. We should combine studying and implementing the spirit of the 19th National Congress with studying the Constitution. In carrying out constitutional education, it is necessary to organically combine constitutional education with the study of the party's 19th spirit, Xi Jinping's new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the study of constitutional amendments. To make the constitutional knowledge more vivid and relevant to the reality of college students, and to enhance their ability to understand and apply the constitutional knowledge. It focuses on the essence and characteristics of the constitution, the guiding ideology of the constitution, the basic spirit of the current constitution, the basic system and the rights and obligations of citizens, etc. in theory, so that students can establish the idea that the constitution is the highest standard of everyone's behavior, and unconstitutional is the most serious illegal concept. Change the traditional one-way indoctrination teaching method, start from the needs of students, and carry out various forms of in-class practice, such as rule of law news explanation, debating competition, simulation court, etc., to stimulate students' interest in learning and achieve the comprehensive educational effect of combining theoretical education, practical education and students' self-education [10]. A wide range of constitutional cases closely related to daily life are collected and incorporated into constitutional teaching. Through the analysis of cases by students, the interest of college students in constitutional practice is promoted.

#### ***4.3 Give Full Play to the Joint Efforts of inside and Outside Schools to Create a Good Legal Culture Atmosphere***

The cultural environment for the cultivation of constitutional consciousness refers to the sum of all external factors that affect the cultivation of constitutional consciousness. To create a good cultural environment for the rule of law, we need to give full play to the joint efforts of both inside and outside schools. To establish the idea that all state power belongs to the people, for college students, it is to cultivate the sense of ownership and actively participate in the political, economic and cultural life of the country. Strengthening the college students' awareness of constitutional rights and obligations, thus arousing their subjective initiative in learning constitutional knowledge, and consciously and actively learning constitutional knowledge, has achieved the goal of enhancing college students' constitutional awareness. At present, if we want to improve college students' understanding of the constitution, we can only rely on popularizing constitutional knowledge and increasing the education of constitutional law knowledge. In-depth publicity and education on the rule of law should be carried out to guide the whole people to consciously abide by the law, find laws when problems arise, and rely on laws to solve problems. "The news media provide strong public opinion support

for the publicity and education of the rule of law and the implementation of the Constitution. Organize college students to study the latest constitutional amendment, deeply understand the spirit of the latest constitutional amendment, and enhance college students' constitutional awareness in the new era.

#### ***4.4 Promoting the Constitutional Consciousness of College Students and Cultivating the Overall Quality of Teachers***

The constitutional consciousness of college students directly determines their ideological and political quality, whether we can stick to the socialist road and whether our goal of building a socialist country ruled by law can be realized. In order to cultivate the constitutional awareness of college students, teachers should also aim at “four hases” and improve the overall quality of teachers. One is to enhance the ideological and moral qualities of teachers. The professionalism of teachers and the artistry of teaching directly affect the breadth and depth of college students' constitutional knowledge learning and their interest and enthusiasm in actively learning constitutional knowledge. In order to cultivate college students' constitutional awareness, teachers of basic legal courses in colleges and universities should change their teaching concepts. Under the condition of limited teaching hours of basic legal courses, in the teaching of basic legal courses, the constitution should be taught as the key content, and the key content should be taught. Colleges and universities should carry out the training of teachers' constitutional knowledge, constitutional spirit and constitutional teaching ability, go out for investigation, academic exchanges, etc., so as to improve teachers' theoretical level and practical ability. The third is to improve the assessment and withdrawal mechanism of teachers. Making explicit provisions on the constitutional oath in the form of a fundamental law can better demonstrate the authority and dignity of the constitution and promote its implementation.

### **5. Conclusion**

Strengthening the constitutional awareness of college students in the new era is the need to build a socialist society with Chinese characteristics in the new era, is a key step to build a harmonious campus environment, and is an important measure to safeguard their rights. A strong youth makes a strong China. “Only when contemporary college students have systematic constitutional knowledge can they have scientific constitutional consciousness and constitutional pursuit. With the overall promotion of the strategy of ruling the country according to law, higher requirements have been put forward for college students as the backbone of society. This latest amendment to the constitution has comprehensively improved the definition of “rule of law” in the constitution, and reflects a new leap in the concept and method of ruling the country by law under the historical background of the new era. It will help contemporary college students to enhance their constitutional awareness and has far-reaching significance in promoting the rule of law in an all-round way. It is hoped that these countermeasures can provide some references for colleges and universities to enhance the constitutional awareness of college students in the new era.

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